

providing said first identifier to said slide, and

? verifying the staining protocol from the identifiers.

30. (NEW) The method of claim 29 further comprising initiating the staining protocol when identifiers are verified or not initiating the staining protocol when identifiers are not verified.

31. (NEW) The method of claim 29 further comprising scheduling staining protocols for a plurality of specimen slides.

CZ 32. (NEW) The method of claim 29 wherein the reagent pack provided is adjacent said specimen slide.

33. (NEW) The method of claim 29 wherein the first and second identifiers contain the same information.

34. (NEW) The method of claim 29 wherein the reagent pack provided comprises a set of wells for reagents for a staining protocol.

35. (NEW) A method for automated staining of specimen slides comprising providing an apparatus comprising

at least one slide tray holding at least one specimen slide and an associated accompanying specific reagent pack having reagents for processing said slide and identifiers for a staining protocol,

an automatic staining head assembly operatively associated with said slide tray for obtaining said reagents from said reagent pack and depositing said reagents on said specimen slide and for reading said identifiers,

a control system controlling said assembly for staining slides, and

an input operative to pause said apparatus during processing, and

an input operative to restart said apparatus after pausing,

adding at least a second specimen slide to said apparatus during a staining protocol, and

initiating said control system to cause said assembly to initiate a staining protocol for said second specimen slide.

36. (NEW) The method of claim 35 wherein adding said second slide comprises initiating said pause input. *WAB*

37. (NEW) The method of claim 35 wherein said identifiers comprise a barcode and said assembly initiates staining by reading said barcode.

38. (NEW) The method of claim 35 wherein said second slide requires high staining priority and said restart input initiates an autocontrol program to provide high priority for staining said second slide.

revised
39. (NEW) A method for segregating waste reagent from an autostainer comprising providing an apparatus comprising

a slide rack for holding at least one specimen slide to be stained with a reagent, and

a tiltable sink assembly for collecting waste reagent after staining said slide, said assembly comprising

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a first drain hole on a first side such that waste reagent drains through said first hole when said sink is tilted down on said first side, and

a second drain hole on a second side such that waste reagent drains through said second hole when said sink is tilted down on said second side,

providing reagent to stain said slide, and

segregating waste reagent from said slide by tilting said sink assembly.

40. (NEW) The method of claim 39 further comprising segregating hazardous and nonhazardous waste by tilting said sink assembly to provide nonhazardous waste to a first drain hole coupled to a sewage system, and to provide hazardous waste to a second drain hole coupled to a hazardous waste container.

note 2
41. (NEW) A method to add a new specimen slide to an in-process staining protocol of an autostainer comprising

pausing the in-process protocol of an autostainer comprising

at least one slide tray holding at least one specimen slide and an associated accompanying specific reagent pack having reagents for processing said slide and identifiers for a staining protocol,

an automatic staining head assembly operatively associated with said slide tray for obtaining said reagents from said reagent pack and depositing said reagents on said specimen slide and for reading said identifiers,

C2 a control system operatively coupled to and controlling said assembly for staining slides,

an input operative to pause said apparatus during processing, and

an input operative to restart said apparatus after pausing,

adding the new specimen slide containing an identifier to the autostainer,

and

providing a restart input to the control system, thereby causing the assembly to read identifiers on the new specimen slide to add said new specimen slide to said staining protocol.
